Issue 48 April 2006

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Ivor's Choir
Leys residents singing at the Kassam Stadium last month as part of a Channel Five TV show

The FREE community newspaper for all of the Leys

LeysNews48

Leys News is a not-for-profit business dedicated to providing news and information to the whole community. We are not affiliated to any political party, and we operate an equal opportunities policy and encourage any resident to get involved in its work.

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LeysNews49

Out Early June
Copy & Advertising Deadline:
10th May 06

Leys News acknowledges financial assistance from: Oxford City Council, Ealing Family Housing Association, Oxford Citizens Housing Association, Cherwell Housing Trust, Awards for All, Blackbird Leys Community Chest, and the Community Champions Fund and support from: Newsquest (Oxfordshire) Ltd. and Business Boffins Ltd. ***Leys News*** is a company limited by guarantee No. 3591512

editorial

The Season of Significant Anniversaries is Upon Us.

This is the **tenth** year of Leys News' continuous publication. This issue arrives with 20 pages as we build up to our next special 32-page (up from our regular 16) anniversary issue in June. Please contact us to be a part of that celebratory edition. The CDI is also **ten** years old, and marks this event by a launch of its new logo.

This April marks the **twentieth** anniversary of Oxford United's Victory in the Milk Cup back in 1986. Flip over to the back page where Phil Citrone reflects on the Wembly event and current goings on at the club.

Closer home, the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, the home of the 'wooden blackbird', is also celebrating: turn to the centre-spread for an open invitation! This is BLAP's **thirtieth** year. In this issue, Alston Quammie, her new manager (and our *Leys Personality* for this issue) talks about BLAP's rebirth and her new plans for Easter after surviving a funding crunch.

Plans for Blackbird Leys' own **fiftieth** anniversary, which will be marked next year, will be rolled out from our next issue. Look out for a series of commemorative programmes which will begin to run until it climaxes, hopefully, in the 2007 edition of our annual Leys Fair.

Yet, these anniversaries pale into insignificance, set beside the **centenary** of Mrs Gladys Forster, who will be a hundred years on 8th June, 2006. In response to our call for 'the oldest of us all' we bring you Gladys' story. A resident of Longlands, Gladys is expecting the telegram from the Queen along with fellow centenarian and Longlands resident, Olive Rawle, who will also hit the hundred mark on June 11. Do we have other centenarians on the Leys? Now you know what to do.

Meantime, we are pleased to announce two new sponsors for Leys News. Our centre-spread is sponsored by the Oxford City Council's Neighbourhood Renewal, while our Arts and Culture focus is sponsored by BMW Group Plant Oxford. We welcome our new partners, who join the Potential Project and our many and consistent advertisers and funders in supporting the Leys News vision of community.

I hope you will notice the upbeat changes in the new-look Leys News. Brace yourself as Julian Dourado really digs in for the Anniversary Issue refit.

CHUMA NWOKOLO, JR.

Walking the Way to Health

Introducing the Blackbird Leys Local Health Walk.

The walk runs every Monday, 2pm (except bank holidays) from the Leisure Centre. The walk is between one and two miles depending on the route taken that day. Everyone is welcome & the walk is free. Walkers are encouraged to wear a pair of sensible shoes and appropriate out door clothing.

The idea of health walk is to encourage people who have been relatively inactive for a while to get moving again. Everyone walks at their own pace & is encouraged to increase their pace gradually. Joining a health walk is also a good way to meet other people and socialise. If you would like more information visit the 'Walking the way to Health Initiative' website www.whi.org.uk

Why walking for health?

Walking is set to play a bigger role in creating a healthier nation. Described by health experts as 'almost perfect exercise', walking requires no equipment or expense and is the ideal way for most people to become more active. Seven out of every ten people in this country are not physically active enough to benefit their health.

Help Needed

Leys News is looking for distributors on a variety of paper rounds.

If you'd like to join our team for a few hours once every two months call us on Oxford 711 756

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Like To Earn Some Extra Cash?
Leys News is looking for community journalists to gather stories and take photos for the paper. We'll pay £15 per item published and an extra £5 if you can supply us with a picture. Enthusiasm and an eye for a story are more important than experience.
Just give us a ring on 711756 if you'd like to get involved.

Parish Council

This month the Parish Council gave Pathway Workshop a grant to pay their rates, (£4,000 approx) we considered that this project was one that is beneficial to our community and should be supported.

It is hoped that a meeting shortly with a Government Minister will help the Pathway workshop get Government backing.

A grant has also been given to the youth project held at the Barn to help with replacing broken equipment.

New fencing barriers are being installed at the junction of Windale Ave and Dunnocks Way. This is to help protect young children at Windale School when crossing the busy junction.

Vodaphone applied to South Oxford District Council for planning permission to site a mast opposite Nightingale Ave and Grenoble Road junction. The Parish Council wrote on behalf of residents objecting to this proposal as being too near residential homes.

We have heard that planning permission was rejected and would like to think that our letters of objection were a major factor in SODC refusing permission. The battle may have been won but the war continues.

The Parks department are installing new equipment in Gillian's Park. We would like residents to report any vandalism to the new equipment, it's our young children who will suffer if it is destroyed again there is not a bottomless pit of money for replacements.

At last the new lights in Blackbird Leys Park have been agreed. It is hoped that as soon as planning consent is given the lights will be erected to give park users a safer place to walk through.

BY BRIAN LESTER

Want to Advertise in *Leys News*?

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Get On Your Bike!

Oxfordshire's Newest Charity Bike Ride will raise funds for research into the secondary spread of Breast Cancer

Residents of Oxfordshire, whether keen cyclists or those owning a bike which hardly ever comes out of the garage, are being invited to help to raise funds for Oxfordshire-based charity, *Against Breast Cancer*.

This is the time to dust off the cobwebs and start thinking about warmer days and a pleasant ride through some beautiful countryside. The ride has been created to suit all ages and abilities and offers an option of either a 30 or 60-mile route.

The start and finish will be Harwell International Business Centre and the circular ride will meander through some of the most beautiful rolling Oxfordshire countryside following the River Thames as it travels from South Oxfordshire to the Vale of the White Horse.

The entry fee is £12.50 per person, but this sum only covers the costs of running the ride and ensuring that cyclists are safe. There is a signed route, marshals, mechanics, refreshment stops, first aid and support vehicles.

All sponsorship funds raised by the cyclists will contribute to vital research the charity carries out on behalf of those living with the disease.

Diane Howe, Head of Fundraising at *Against Breast Cancer*, says "This is our first ever ABC Sponsored Bike Ride and we hope that it will prove a great success and run for years to come . . . it will be a great outing and help raise as much money as they can!"

Diane continues "Research shows that one in nine women in the UK will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime. *Against Breast Cancer* carries out ongoing research into breast cancer secondary spread, with the aim of increasing survival after treatment. We are currently undertaking a five year diet and lifestyle study following the progress of ladies after diagnosis. With the results of this study we will be able to offer vital guidance and advice to patients regarding their diet and lifestyle which we hope will help to prolong survival. Data collected through this study will also provide us with important information leading to the introduction of a vaccine to combat this devastating disease."

ABC Classic Oxfordshire Bike Ride

14 May 2006,
Start & Finish - Harwell

For further information please contact Diane Howe:

Phone 0870 7744288
or 01235 820506
Emai: dhowe@aabc.org.uk
Web: www.aabc.org.uk.

leys personality

Alston Quammie

Alston in front of the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground.

Alston Quammie was born in Oxford and has spent most of his life in this city, apart from a four-year stint in London. He has also spent most of his life working with children. He has more than seventeen years experience working with youths - while running and setting up playgroups. Up until February he was working at the youth project at the Barn, but back in January, 2006 he started his new Assignment at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground (BLAP) on Cuddesdon Way.

Leys News wanted to know why he opted for a career with children. "I love children, and at that formative age, there's just so much more you can do to positively impact on them.' But a man working in the playground among children breaks many preconceptions. We asked Alston what he felt about this. 'I encourage young men to train in this field,' he said. There are very few male role models for children to follow and it does affect children, particularly boys.'

Alston is enthusiastic about his mission at BLAP. His priorities are to upgrade the facilities available, while improving the grounds by building a patio around the building and a concrete pathway to the gate. BLAP currently provides snooker, table tennis, hockey, basket ball and bowling facilities for its after-school club. Other games available are cricket and rounders. The After-School club still has vacancies and parents can ring Alston on 01865-740774, if the £2 daily charge is standing between their children and a good time.

Alston's other priorities for BLAP are the security of the premises in the light of OFSTED standards on Adult Access. Already he has improved the lighting around the playground, and plans to renew and raise the front fencework. 'The Playground was a little rundown, but it has plenty of potential. We have already secured £50,000 worth of funding over two years for staffing and running costs; we are looking for more funding to get things done.

Alston's roots trail all the way back to St. Vincent, while his last name goes even further back to Ghana. He is married with three children of his own - so going home for him should be the perfect busman's holiday!

Fresh Enthusiam for 10 year old CDI

August 2006 marks 10 years of the CDI Summer Project. The newly launched logo (page 15) is not the only exciting thing about the project . . .

CDI Youth Development Manager, Beth Knowles.

There's a celebratory buzz around the Community Development Initiative (CDI) this year, and no wonder, it's the tenth anniversary of the charity which was established to enhance the development and co-ordination of local projects that will bring long-term benefits to the Leys community.

The holiday projects started, using the resources of many organisations, the talents of many local workers as well as the time and enthusiasm of lots of kind-hearted volunteers.

The summer project has kept up to two hundred young people active and creative every summer, with activities as diverse as wrestling, cartoon drawing, sculpture and kite-making. No one has a chance to get bored!

The Summer Project has grown into a four-week project sprawling across many venues - the Youth Centre, The Barn, the Jubilee Community Centre, and various parks and streets. There is a celebratory twang to this year's project. CDI's regulars cannot wait for summer!

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'SILENT' Sirens? Who would believe it?

BLAG (Blackbird Leys Art Group) is finally branching out beyond the Leys and is currently holding its second multimedia art exhibition at St. Luke's Record Office, opposite the Temple Cowley Swimming Pool.

Six artists from the Leys are marking the Oxford International Women's Festival with more than 40 inspiring pieces of art in an exhibition entitled 'Silent Sirens'.

They told Leys News that they chose the title because "the word *Sirens* is a symbol of alluring femininity and the fact that we have strong voices as women as well. The word *silent* is a bit of a joke because we have lots to say! They also said that "though we also believe that our art speaks for itself. It is art to look at and contemplate."

BLAG is exhibiting a variety of alluring acrylic and oil paintings, joyful paintings made of plaster and paint, different prints, delicate illustrations, a wire sculpture swimming through air, welded metal sculptures, as well as beautiful and intriguing ceramics.

Here is what the six artists told us about their favourite piece of their own artwork featuring in the not-so-silent 'Silent Sirens' exhibition:

Jane Whiting: "The metal sculpture 'Fern Fiend'. I am proud of it because it's bold, masculine and pulsating with dark energy, and because the welding is holding together."

Tanya Prescott: "My only painting in this exhibition, because it expresses an emotion I wanted to share."

Debbie Scrivener: "I am proud of all my paintings because they are all part of me. They are a visual representation of what is inside me."

Hailey Winstone: "I am most proud of 'the Debutanter' because I have a fondness for illustrating writing."

Karen Godwin: "I'd always wanted to make a 'Mother Earth' and the time was right just after giving birth to Rosie and being pregnant with Misty."

Ines Kretzschmar: "I most love my sculpture 'The Siren' as it is my very first welded metal sculpture; it celebrates the proud and confident women who have learnt to fly."

You can see the exhibition at St Luke's Record Office (opposite Temple Cowley Swimming Pool) until the 30th April 2006. The exhibition is open every Wednesday till Saturday from 9am till 5pm.

Above: Silent Siren by Ines Kretzschmar

BLAG

If you would like to join the Blackbird leys Art Group, they meet in term time on Monday evening 6.30pm to 8.30pm and Thursday morning 9.30 to 11.30am. BLAG always welcome new members.

For info and updates about BLAG events email: blagontheleys@yahoo.co.uk or call Ines Kretzschmar on 01865 749596

Are you the Oxford Poetry Champ?

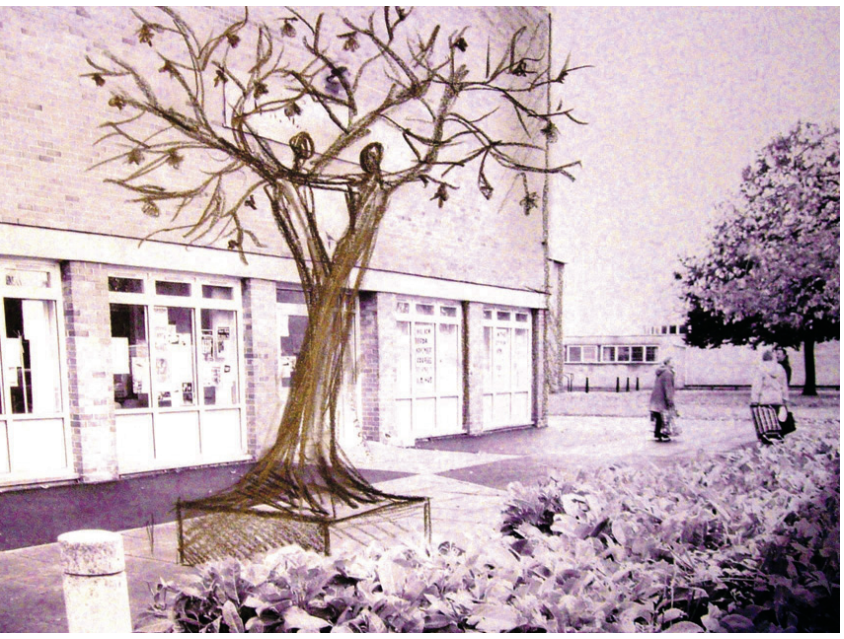
The search is on for the Oxford poetry champion. One poet will represent each UK town in the National Poetry Anthology - the UK's biggest annual poetry competition.

Entry is free and, like all the winners, the Oxford winner gets a free copy of the book with their poem in it. One overall winner also receives £1000.

"The National Poetry Anthology is designed to encourage new writers," said editor Peter Quinn. "It has rocketed in popularity and we expect the new one to be even better."

Send three unpublished poems on any subject (up to 20 line and 160 words each) to United Press Ltd, Admail 3735, London EC1B 1JB by the closing date of June 30th 2006, or visit www.unitedpress.co.uk.

Youngsters Break The Mould



Above: artist's impression of how the Glow Tree Sculpture will look when installed.

Left: Debbie Scrivener working on her metal sculpture mentored by Neil Wood.

Young people created fantastic pieces of artwork at a workshop organized by BLAG and sculptor Neil Wood. Fifteen youngsters moulded clay and turned them into funky plaster casts.

Cally, who came along said "It was very interesting. It's not like the stuff we do everyday!"

The casts went on display later that day when local people were invited to meet the sculptor, Neil, and talk to him about the Glow Tree, which has now recieved planning permission from the South East Area Committee.

The Glow Tree sculpture will stand five metres high outside Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre and be unique to Blackbird Leys.

BLAG sent three of its members to Stafford to visit Neil's studio.

They learnt more about bronze casting and made sparks fly, welding some inspiring metal sculptures of their own.

The current BLAG exhibition Silent Sirens *can be seen at St Luke's Record Office, until the end of April.*

Creation Theatre News

Above: A scene from Creation's production of Midsummer's Night Dream

It looks like another busy summer for Oxford's Creation Theatre Company. In the beautiful arboretum that is Headington Hill Park they will be staging Macbeth from 2nd June to 9th September. In the same park they will be performing Robin Hood from 20th July to 7th September.

Between 30th June and 19th August, Creation will be performing The Merchant of Venice in the former exercise yard of Oxford Prison, part of the Oxford Castle development.

Also there will be Sunday music events in Oxford Castle and a summer of Creation 4 Kids workshops.

Box Office: 01865 766266 or www.creationtheatre.co.uk

competition

Win with BMW Group Plant Oxford!

Every issue you have a chance to win special prizes with BMW Group Plant Oxford. As well as sponsoring this page, they are holding a draw for readers to win goodie bags. To enter, tell us in which venue Creation Theatre is staging Robin Hood.

Send your answer, name and address to Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, or ring us on 01865 711756

UKdads & The Potential Project

The Be-Your-Own-Boss Club

Small business owners can sometimes find it hard to get their business moving during the early stages and one of the keys to success is sharing ideas with fellow small business owners.

To suppport this concept, Business Link has developed a club in Oxfordshire called Be-Your-Own-Boss. The sister club in South Buckinghamshire already has a membership of three hundred business-folk.

Some benefits of membership include getting expert opinions and best practice advice from professionals and more experienced small business owners. There will also be access to various training and funding opportunites as well as networking and business promotion opportunities.

Regular e-newsletters and club meetings throughout Oxfordshire are also on offer to members, who are welcome to express their views and influence future club meetings.

The already scheduled club nights are as follows:

19 April: Exeter Hall, Kidlington.
18 May: 4 Pillars Hotel Abingdon.
28 June: Exeter Hall, Kidlington
20 July: Waterstock Training Centre.

Events start at 6 pm and finish at 8 pm. Membership of the club and all club nights are free. Call 01844 210430 to join; or events@businesslinksolutions.co.uk

Last Chance to Catch Theatre Express Bus

If you haven't seen the '70s cult classic, ***The Harder They Come,*** this final call may be for you. The special Theatre Express coach taking local residents to see this play departs from Blackbird Leys for London's Theatre Royal on 22nd April, at 4pm.

A few £12 tickets are still on sale, but you've got to hurry. Contact The Potential Project for further details.

In ***The Harder They Come***, country-boy Ivan leaves the Jamaican countryside in search of fame.

The play brings some of the greatest Carribean songs back on stage. Theatre-goers should expect to see, *'You can get it if you really want', 'Many Rivers to Cross', 'Pressure Drop', 'By the Rivers of Babylon'* and many others.

Dads-Lads-Lasses Do

Cuddeson Corner is the venue of the all-new Dads-Lads-Lasses programme which holds every 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month from 11am - 2pm. It is all free; Launch date is 29th April, 2004. *Be there!*

UKdads & The Potential Project
26 Kingfishers Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX. Tel: 779298
Email: ukdadsposse@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.ukdadsposse.co.uk
Supported by the European Social Fund, Oxfordshire County Council, and Learning and Skills Council.

MOT Day

After a very successful first outing, the next Men's Health MOT Day will hold on the 29th of April 2006, between the hours of 11am and 2pm at the Cuddesdon Corner Children's Centre.

Free check-ups and medical advice will be on offer. The Dad's Zone Project will also be launched. Dad's Zone is a partnership between Cuddesdon Corner Children Centre, UK Dads & Potential Project and will be run on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month. Each day will revolve around one major activity like money advice sessions, reflexology fun days - any excuse really for men to spend time with their children!

Drop in Session for Dads

If you have issues that you want to talk through, UK Dads are running Drop-in Sessions at the Kingfisher Green Centre on Wednesday between 2pm and 4pm.

Look out for Employment workshops and one-on-one counselling. Contact Project workers for details.

Leys Landmark Competition

Congratulations to nine-year old **Branan Ross** of Pine Close, Blackbird Leys. You (and Josh Bannister (8), Emily Johnson (9), Mathew Linzey (8), and B. Gill) correctly recognised the Giant Blackbird in the Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground on Cuddesdon Way.

Branan's name was the first name out of the hat, so do have your parents call us on 01865-779298 to arrange for you to pick up your prize.

Dads' Cook-Up Taster Session

UK Dads & the Potential Project are calling fathers and father-to-be to join them for a taster session. Come for the conversation, and find out what it takes to be a dad. We need your voice and your presence (plus our cooking is not too bad!)

Entry: Free.
Venue: Florence Park Family Centre
Date: Wednesday 22nd April,
Time: 1- 2.30pm

Young Fathers Wanted!

The Cricket Road Family Centre on Rymers Lane is the new venue for the Young Dads sessions. Young men needing information on fatherhood are welcome to these meets which are run in partnership with the Cricket Road Centre and Health Promotion Team of the Oxford PCT.

A scene from the last Mens' MOT day at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. The next MOT day holds on 29th April. See adjacent story.

Men & Mental Health

Nigel Carter, Community Development Worker for BME Communities, on pitfalls waiting for the male of the species

For every four UK suicides, three of them are male, yet, men are far less likely to seek medical attention than women. This 'Male Denial Factor' means that many physical - and psychological problems will never get to the GP's surgery until it is too late.

Studies suggest that depression occurs as often in men as in women. Unemployment is a major cause of depression and suicide in men, and one in seven men who become unemployed will develop depression within six months.

Due to a combination of social and other factors men appear to be increasingly more vulnerable to mental health difficulties. It is necessary for men to let go of the conditioning that often makes them reluctant to seek help for emotional problems. This need is particularly pressing for people from Black & Minority ethnic communities. It is important to seek early medical help for mental distress, rather than leaving things until a crisis erupts.

'Count Me -In', the first ever census of the ethnicity of people using in-patient mental health services, recently revealed that Black African and Caribbean people were three times more likely to be admitted to hospital in England and Wales than the rest of the population.

The census also showed that Black African and Caribbean people were up to 44% more likely to be detained under the Mental Health Act.

This census raises many obvious questions, but it also highlights the need for urgent action and Oxford City is now an early implementer site for 'Delivering Race Equality' in Mental Health, a five-year action plan, which incudes the recruitment of Community Development Workers to improve the mental health experiences of black and minority ethnic people.

My current role involves working in partnership with BME Community Groups, and voluntary sector organisations like Oxfordshire Mind and Oxfordshire Mental Health Matters, to promote quicker and easier access to services for people in the communities that need them.

If you need information or advice on Mental Health, phone Nigel on 01865 456624. You can also meet him at The Potential Project's next 'Men's Health MOT Day' on 29 April.

Home-Visiting Service for Dads

Young Dad, Marcus Imrie of the Potential Project

In partnership with The Leys Children's Centre Project, UK Dads & the Potential Project are introducing a new Home-Visiting Service for Dads.

Experienced Dads' worker, **Carlton Gabiddon**, will be available to visit families along with other counsellors. Carlton, who has experience in conflict resolution, issues around access, parenting and family life, will be available for joint visits with the staff of the Children's Centre.

Visits can be scheduled for Mondays and Wednesdays, between 11am and 4 pm. Call UK Dads on 779298 or The Leys Children Centre on 779615 to schedule a visit.

. . . Leys News Photo Special . . .

Kenya Story

From Janurary to April this year, Leys News editor Becky Telford is away from her home in the Leys and living and working in Nairobi, Kenya, as a consultant for Homeless International - a UK-based charity that supports community-led housing projects around the world.

Three million people, one tenth of Kenya's population, live in cities. Most are in unrecognised informal settlements or cheap, basic rentals. Social conditions are poor and services non-existent. In fact, 60 per cent of Nairobi's residents live in socially disastrous slums.

On this page are photographs that Becky has taken in and around Kambi Moto - a slum village in the Huruma district of Nairobi.

Up to 2003, the residents of Kambi Moto lived like any other slum dwellers do — in crowded, poorly built shacks, made of any material they could find such as cardboard, pieces of iron sheets and polythene sheeting. Fresh water was a dream, drainage and sewerage something they only saw in the leafy suburbs of the city where some of them went to work.

Today, all that has changed. Thirty-four residents live in permanent, well-ventilated houses, provided with flush toilets, kitchen, living area and bedroom. And it is expected that in another year, 270 more units will have been completed to accommodate residents of Kambi Moto.

Top right: Enumeration Woman, Huruma, Nairobi.

Left: Leys News Editor Becky Telford.

Bottom left: community bulit house at Kambi Moto, Nairobi.

Bottom right: mural against social ills at Korogacho, Nairobi.

What's on at Oxford Greyhound Stadium?

March 26th - Mothers Day

- Admission
- Racecard
- Free Surprise Gift for each Mum (or Dad's dressed as Mum's)
- 4 Course Sunday Roast
- 3 hours of live action racing

Adults: £20.00 Children: £12.00 (aged 5-14) £7.50 (under 5's)

Doors open 1.30pm first race approx 2.20pm

April 14th - Good Friday — Closed

April 16th - Easter Sunday

- Admission
- Racecard
- Free Easter Egg Hunt for the Kids
- 3 Course Sunday Roast
- 3 hours of live action racing

Adults: £20.00 Children: £12.00 (aged 5-14) £7.50 (under 5's)

Doors open 1.30pm first race approx 2.20pm

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LN

soapbox

The Heartache of the Leys

A Tale of Suffering in Blackbird Leys

BY MJ GOHARI

To someone who has never been to, or heard of Blackbird Leys, a short trip may not give a realistic impression of what is unfolding here. You get to see school children nicely groomed and dressed, with a little bit of chaos typical to all school children.

Young girls try in their own way to look their best with a great deal of observation for the latest fashion flavours. The houses come in various types from the adjacent borders of the neighbourhood to the rest of the City to external edges of the Greater Leys or what has come to be known as the "New Estate". They are more or less all right and care has been taken by authorities to keep the streets as clean as it is affordably possible. At times one can observe a build-up of rubbish that could be a result of some unknown delays in collections but that is not an exclusive problem to this neighbourhood.

All seems OK unless - you get to live here.

To the other residents of Oxford, this is a "no go" area; a danger zone; an area where poverty is a cause of crime and as such a place of high risk for the better-off.

The authorities try to raise the area's reputation by constantly emphasizing the significance that they attach to this place in their deliberations and consultations. They insist that the crime rate has drastically fallen and the statistics show that the situation had undergone a great deal of improvement and as they put it: "Blackbird Leys is not what it used to be".

Some of their efforts are more or less noticeable. Yet the roots of deprivation remain largely unidentified.

Some are of the belief that all this stems from the fact that the cultural richness of Blackbird Leys residents is not recognised. To others, the issue is simply the lack of tools with which the youth in this area can be diverted from idleness and getting into trouble. The solutions offered are more or less temporary and short-term.

Ideas such as providing computer games are promoted and executed. This could be some solution but it is not lasting and hazard free.

Also trying to provide opportunities for the young to see themselves as musicians by helping them to have easy access to the right gear is also on the table and to some extent commendable.

It is again one of those arenas where advantages and disadvantages are mixed and a source of confusion.

The advantages are self-evident and yet there are things that merit consideration as negative in this regard such as the slim likelihood of creating remarkable numbers of successful musicians who can make a decent living in the most brutally competitive music business and also by overemphasising the energy and time that a young person can put into musical experimenting, we might unknowingly raise hopes unduly causing unwanted emotional breakdowns.

I sincerely believe that all these efforts have been for the good of the residents and yet there is a major failure in seeing and addressing the core of problems. This in turn may be the outcome of a one sided or single dimensional approach towards tackling the issues facing the area.

M. J. Gohari

Probably the expression "Deficit of Hope" can stand as a single major concern so far as the material and mental welfare of Blackbird Leys is concerned.

The people here see themselves and also are indirectly made to understand that theirs is the bottom of the social strata in Oxford. Sometimes even innocent efforts by well-wishers only intensify the feeling.

Politicians tend to believe that by overstressing, they can raise a higher level of awareness and at times demonstrate failure of their opponents in carrying out their duties.

I believe Blackbird Leys has somehow suffered from this, and ironically enough the practise has raised a sense of vulnerability and helplessness among residents.

The people cannot see many choices before them. In all walks of life what they can do is more or less severely confined by unfavourable circumstances.

Scarcity of employment opportunities coupled with the lack of proper education stemming again from the shortage of resources as well as physiological issues have created an individual and also a collective immense sense of despair that becomes increasingly painful when one considers the lack of sufficient support for them, even in dealing with their most basic needs such as getting to know their rights to the state benefits and life-improving schemes and how they can effectively wean themselves from dependency.

Predominantly, families and individuals here have a feeling that in dealing with harassments, they ought to rely on external help only in a limited way.

All in all, for many, life is not moving anywhere and they feel they are trapped in a web of sad circumstances that make it impossible for them to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Under these circumstances all other social and domestic problems such as broken relationships and drug abuse both increase in number and become even more agonizing.

Blackbird Leys needs realistic and real help and this can only be achieved if all institutions and individuals of influence in Oxford get together and instead of partisan disputes, devise a comprehensive scheme to empower the people in this area.

Long-term solutions are particularly welcome. Moving the venues of major events such as conferences and exhibitions as well as other parallel measures could help improve the image of the area and create decent employment.

Likewise, the universities could develop more empathy for those who live closer to their facilities, and who are more desperate for them. They ought to come up with packages for help and form committees that constantly consult with local people and advise them.

"We must consider the unlikelihood of large numbers of our youths making a decent living from the music business..."

In a situation where the local people remain immensely disadvantaged educationally, it is prudent to consider some proportionate level of positive discrimination for them, not only because they are fellow humans in need within a geographic catchment area, but also due to the fact that these are people who have contributed presently and in the past, directly and indirectly to the general prosperity of Oxford universities in various ways - not least of all by hosting their students or teaching them their basic English.

The opinions expressed in this column are those of the author, and not necessarily those of *LeysNews*.
Send reactions - and articles - to leysnews@hotmail.co.uk
or write to *LeysNews*, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BX.

New Look For Nash's

Nash's Bakery's shop in Blackbird Leys has undergone a major new refit with new counters and display units installed to better show-off their range of traditionally made breads and cakes.

A new hot display counter has also been fitted to keep up with the growing demand for their freshly baked savouries and freshly made filled breakfast rolls.

There has been a Nash's Bakery shop in Blackbird Leys since the early 1960's and owner Mark Nash feels the Baker's shop has an increasingly important role to play in the community.

He says, "In these modern times people are taking much more interest in their health and especially in what they're eating, so small independent food businesses like ours which pride themselves on the quality and freshness of their products are becoming more important than ever in every community - especially if they are conveniently placed for their customers like we are here in Blackbird Leys."

The shop's manageress, Carol Cothier and her staff are very excited about their shop's new fittings. They promise a warm welcome and the best bread and cakes available to all their customers, old and new.

obituary

Fr Matthias Brady 1928-2006

BY Fr DAVID HARTLEY

In 1966 Fr Matt Brady was appointed to Blackbird Leys as the first parish priest. He was building on the work of the Salesians from Cowley parish, and at first lived with parishioners in Prunus Close, with mass being celebrated in 'the Hut' in Cuddesdon Way.

Many people remember his encouraging approach to the growing Catholic community, and his good working relations with the Holy Family church and its clergy and people. After a few years the diocese began to build our church on a site it had bought from the city on the corner of Sawpit Road and Balfour Road. It was a simple buliding with one area marked off as a sanctuary, but the hall was dual purpose and was used for bingo and many other social activities. Only later was the church divided off to form the present arrangement.

In 1973 Fr Brady left to work in Dudley Road parish in Birmingham, where Fr Pat Armstrong, who was later the priest at Littlemore, was one of his curates.

His final post was as Parish Priest of Fordhouse in Wolverhampton, after which he retired to Co. Fermanagh, where he died died in February. His Funeral mass was celebrated by his nephew, Archbishop Sean Brady.

May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

Anyone with photos or memories to share is welcome to send them to Fr David at Sacred Heart church for inclusion in the parish's anniversary booklet and display soon.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

HAVE YOU EVER SUFFERED FROM DEPRESSION?

We are trying to develop ways of identifying people at risk of depression using a special dietary manipulation.

We are recruiting women between the ages of 18 and 70 who have suffered from depression previously but who are now well.

If you think you might be able to help us please contact Dr Sudhakar Selvaraj
Tel: 01865 223609
Email: sudhakar.selvaraj@psych.ox.ac.uk

OPREC NO 05/Q1604/142
Participants will be reimbursed for their time and expenses

Family Life on the Leys

Sponsored by Oxford City Council's Neigbourhood Renewal

New Nursery Opens in the Leys

A new nursery will open in Blackbird Leys, Oxford in April as part of a complete refurbishment of the Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.

The Imagine Co-operative Childcare nursery is a new addition to the family centre in Cuddesdon Way.

The family centre will be part of the new Leys Children's Centre, which is in the process of being formed to bring together health, childcare, family and early education services in the area.

'Cuddesdon Corner' has undergone a complete refit costing £360,000, funded by Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education and Skills. The project is a partnership of public, private and voluntary sectors, including the council, The Midcounties Co-operative - which runs Imagine nurseries - and local voluntary groups.

The ground floor has been converted to include the Imagine nursery area, a kitchen and toilets. Upstairs there are multi-purpose rooms and a new training room which will be used to run courses for local residents and practitioners. Childcare will be available for parents attending the courses.

An expanded outdoor area will mean that different groups can use the space at different times and whole centre activities can include everyone. Family centre organisers will be involving local families in the design and creation of the garden in coming months.

An open day will be held on Thursday 6 April where local families can look around the Imagine nursery and the family centre. The County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, Cllr Louise Chapman, will join parents and children for a cake cutting ceremony at 12.15pm.

She said: "The new nursery means that parents will have more choice when it comes to flexible and high quality childcare.

"They will also benefit from the wider range of services that the family centre will be able to provide as part of the Leys Children's Centre. 'Cuddesdon Corner' will offer family support, childcare and training and will be an information point about other existing and new services which are joining together in the coming months to form the Leys Children's Centre."

Jenny Martin, acting manager of the family centre, said: "Part of the county council's ethos is to join up services for local families and we were delighted to work with Imagine because they are an established, reputable childcare provider."

Jane Long, neighbourhood nursery manager at Imagine Co-operative Childcare, said: "We were delighted and flattered to be approached about setting up a satellite nursery in the new family centre.

Having spent many years getting to know local families we feel very much part of the community here. We are pleased to be providing affordable childcare to help parents whether they are working or studying. With brand new purpose-built facilities it's an attractive nursery area that is warm and welcoming."

The new Imagine Co-operative Childcare nursery will have 20 places for children aged two to five years, providing 'wrap around' childcare including out-of-school-hours care and a breakfast club. The existing Imagine nursery in Cuddesdon Way offers 54 places and has been run for 12 years, the last two as part of Imagine Co-operative Childcare.

Reservations for places have started already and enquiries can be made by calling Jane Long on 01865 550837. The nursery and the family centre will officially open for business on Monday 10 April.

Right: The Word Fountain Church celebrates its third anniversary with a family bash. Pastor Dupe does the honours.

Easter & Spring Dates for your Diary

DOVECOTE SUMMER PLAYSCHEME

3 TO 5 YRS AND 6 TO 12 YRS

Three to five yrs:10am - 2.30pm
Six to twelve yrs:10am - 3pm

From Monday 24th July
until Thursday 17th August
(1st 2 weeks or 2nd 2 weeks only)

£3.50 per child per day (plus trips)

(Check Dovecote office nearer registration day for trip destinations & prices)
Registration will be held at the Barn, Nightingale Ave, Blackbird Leys, on Friday 14th July, at 9.15 am.
ALL FEES WILL BE REQUIRED ON THE DAY OF REGISTRATION

Telephone Carol on 01865 712299 for further information

Drayton Manor Trip

The Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground is organising a trip to Drayton Manor on the 13th of April, 2005. Please arrive at BLAP on Cuddeson Way, Blackbird Leys at 8.45pm for a 9am departure.

Fees: £20 for Adults and over 12 year olds.
£18.50 for 11 year olds and younger.
Fees cover Entrance and Coach trip.

IT Drop-in at Dovecote

The Dovecote Centre on Nightingale Avenue is holding free IT Drop-in sessions during the May Half-Term.
Come along to surf the world wide web, research information, and catch up on the latest gossip on your favourite pop group and much more.

Dates:
Tuesday 30th May and Wednesday 31st May From10.00am until 3.00pm

Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult or older sibling.
Places are limited to 1 hour per person
(unless we're not busy).

Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground

The Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground is running a special Easter scheme to celebrate its 30th Anniversary - which rounds off with a party for all, at 1pm on April 7th.

April 3: Cooking/Swimming

April 4: Ice Skating/ Arts/Crafts/Games

April 5: Arts/Crafts/Cooking

April 6: Science Gallery Extravaganza @ London Place

April 7: Swimming & BLAP 30th Anniversary Birthday bash.

Call 01865 740774 for more information

The Leys News Centenary Club

Are you the oldest on the Leys?

Mrs. Gladys Forster, Longlands

Mrs. Olive Rawle, Longlands

You have got to be a centenarian to beat Gladys Forster! Gladys, who retired from the Radcliffe Maternity Hospital (as it then was), several decades ago, was born in Oxford on the 8th of June, 1906.

Her father was Arthur Edward North and her mother, Alice North, nee Green. She was born at 4 Yew Tree Cottages, Pensions Gardens, St. Clements.

Gladys is the last surviving of eleven children. She married her late husband, Percy, back in 1928 and has lived on Windale Avenue, Blackbird Leys, for twenty one years. She has five grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren from her two children, Rita and Keith.

Olive Rawle was born on 11th June, 1906 and will be a hundred years old a few weeks. Olive is a devout Christian who enjoys good food and a quiet life. She has lived on the Leys for the last seven years and has a granddaughter down in Devon.

Gladys Forster, flanked by her children, Rita Aldridge and Keith Forster, both Leys residents.

NHS

THE LEYS PHARMACY

Your Local Community Pharmacy

'Championing your health'

NEW PHARMACY WITH EXTENDED OPENING HOURS

7am - 10pm Monday to Saturday
9am - 7.30pm Sunday

OFFICIAL OPENING 1st APRIL 2006.

Order and collect your prescription at your convenience. Your Local community pharmacy opening at a time that is convenient for you.

SERVICES OFFER INCLUDE:

- Free Prescription Collection and Delivery services
- Free Blood Pressure Testing
- Free Diabetes Screening
- FREE EHC (Emergency Hormonal Contraception) PILL FOR UNDER 18's
- Free Disposal of Unwanted Medicines
- Free Medicine Review Services
- Free Professional Advice on Health Related Matters
- Repeat Dispensing Services
- Residential and Nursing Homes Services

OTHER PHARMACY SERVICES AVAILABLE.
PLEASE ASK US FOR DETAILS.

Leys Pharmacy

UP TO 10% OFF

with this voucher

5% of all purchase under £10, and 10% of any purchase more than £10 in a single transation. During the month of April 06.

Except prescription charges.

In Spar, Dunnock Way, Greater Leys, Oxon OX4 7EX, tel: 01865 401430

Leys Youth Centre:
What's New and What's On?

The Barn Seniors Youth Project.

The Barn happens every Wednesday evening between 7:30 - 9:30pm and is for those over 13, it is based in the Barn which is off Nightingale Avenue in Greater Leys, it has friendly staff, free Internet access, there is also a tuck shop and games like basketball, Table football and pool available. There is also a fortnightly Open Decks for DJs and MCs to jam with a full sound system available. It's a great atmosphere for fun and friendly chat, Console games and sometimes fun arty projects you can join in with, Entry is only 10p. Please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886.

Art Group at the Blackbird Leys Youth Centre.

The Art Group is based at the Blackbird leys youth centre is open every Thursday night between 5:30pm - 7:30pm during term times only. Every week there is something fun and creative to be done in the Art room. You can be creative and make, draw or just have fun with art. There is also a sports hall where games of five-a-side football, basketball and other games are played, you can also hang around in the blue room where there is a pool table, drinks, biscuits, Videos, fun and friendly chat. There is also access to the Internet through the Youth I.T. Hub that also has multi-player games such as Diablo II and Alien Vs Predator. Entry is 50p. Please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886.

Up Coming Events:

Dead Spaces: with artist Dace Little.

The Dead Spaces is a Art Project that is going to be running for the next 6 months, which has so far had around 35 young people contribute by showing the artist David Little around the estate, taking photo's of places they feel are unused, neglected or ignored. They have also has been working with the artist to develop ideas and creative solutions to improve these spaces around the estate. If you would like to see the process or be involved in the next step please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886. All young people are welcome to be involved.

Bike Project:

The Youth Centre is going to be running a 15 week project for young men, where they can learn to fix, make and maintain their bikes, giving them the opportunity to have fun and learn new skills with friendly staff. If you would like to be involved please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886.

Funky Clothes Project:

The Youth Centre in partnership with the Family Centre will be running a Project for young women, where they can come along and be creative by making their own clothes. Come along and enjoy a friendly atmosphere where you can design, redesign and create clothes for your wardrobe for that summer collection. Times and dates to be arrange, if you wish to be involved please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886.

A.R.T. Project:

The Youth Centre in partnership with S.T.A.X and the Parasol Project is developing a 20 week arts project, the 20 weeks will be split up into three different forms of art. There will be 5 weeks of Photography, 5 weeks of Painting and then 10 weeks of working on a Music and Video project. The art work will then be shown at a exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art. Started 10th March, if you would like to be involved please Contact: Katy Hamilton on (01865) 772886.

The Youth I.T. Hub Sessions:

The Youth I.T. Hub is based in the Blackbird leys community centre beneath the youth club, it has nine machines available for surfing the Net, doing home and course work, it also has multi-player games so you can have fun playing with your friends. It also has after school clubs and home work clubs that are available during the week.

Opening times:
Mon: Closed
Tues: O.C.E Home Work Club: available for those aged 5 - 11 and are open between 4 - 5pm.
Wed: After School Club: available for all young people, open between 4:30 -6:30pm
African Caribbean youth club, available for +13 and is open between 7 - 9pm, Call Dolcie on 01865 778250.
Thurs: After School Club: available for all young people, open between 4 -6pm
Fri: C.D.I: opening times 3:30 - 6:30pm, Call 01865 714492 for more info.
Sat: Oxford Youth Works: Open from 9 - 11, 11- 1, 1- 2:30pm. Call Patrick on 01865 714492.

Recent Events

So far this year Leys Youth Centre members have created art works for public exhibitions in Modern Art Oxford for the 2015 project: Oxford Inspires and art weeks. They have worked with famous artists to design and make pieces for themselves and to go on permanent display around the estate. Look out for the new stuff it should be good.

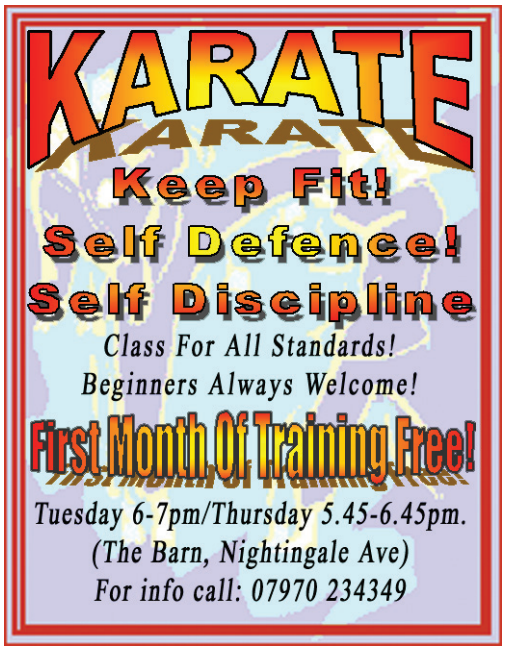
Together we have organised events and trips out, Sailing, Canoeing and to play tennis, football, basketball and generally have a laugh. We swam at Hinksey Pool and played team games at the University sports grounds. Everyone had a great time and said what a pleasure it was to have enthusiastic and friendly young people as a part of the day, some of the young people from Blackbird leys won medals for team spirit and this gave them a strong sense of pride.

A group of young people have been working along side the Artist Neil Wood who is creating the Glow Tree Sculpture which will be erected outside the Blackbird Leys Community Centre, the young people have created some of the bronze leafs that will be under the tree and part of the main sculpture.

Like To Earn Some Extra Cash?

Leys News is looking for community journalists to gather stories and take photos for the paper. We'll pay £15 per item published and an extra £5 if you can supply us with a picture. Enthusiasm and an eye for a story are more important than experience.

Just give us a ring on 711756 if you'd like to get involved.



hints & tips

Help Around The Home

Kitchen tops and sink
Instead of using sterilizing sprays - which are basically just bleach and water. Just pour some bleach into a spray bottle and add water and spray your counter tops and sink with this solution. Let it set for ten minutes then wipe off. Also use this in the bathtub and shower, just spray it on and let it set and it removes mold.

Chewing gum stuck in hair
The easiest way to remove gum is to rub with peanut butter, then wash hair.

Crayons on walls
Rub an art gum eraser over the markings, it comes off pretty easily.

Make stainless steel sinks really shine
Use white vinegar. The results are fantastic!

Wastebaskets
For all the little wastebaskets you have throughout the house, keep folded liners underneath the liner being used. That way you don't have to track down another liner after emptying the basket.

Sealed envelope
Put in the freezer for a few hours, then slide a knife under the flap. The envelope can then be resealed.

Tangled cables?
Use empty toilet paper roll to store appliance cords in. It keeps them neat and you can write on the roll what appliance it belongs to.

Icy door steps?
For icy door steps in freezing temperatures: get warm water and put Dawn dishwashing liquid in it. Pour it all over the steps. They won't refreeze.

More crayon marks on walls?
A damp rag, dipped in baking soda. Comes of with little effort (elbow grease that is!).

Tired of removing sticking plasters the painful way?
Well, no longer must that be a problem. Simply apply a little baby oil directly on the bandaid, wait a moment for the oil to loosen it up, and viola! It will simply peel right off with no pain whatsoever.

Disclaimer: The advice in this column was acquired by Leys News in good faith. Leys News cannot be held responsible for any harm, loss, damage caused by anyone acting upon these tips.

Health Trainers

A new workforce coming soon to the Leys

What are health trainers?

Health trainers are a new NHS workforce who will enable individuals to make changes to their lifestyles to improve their health. They will help people to work out what the priorities are for them, draw up an action plan including referral to the right services and help the client as they start to make the change. They will keep in touch over a period of about 3 months to see how the client is doing and then record the outcome. They will be able to help clients make changes on the topics of healthy eating, increasing physical activity, giving up smoking, responsible levels of drinking alcohol and practicing safe sex. They will also be a link to other services and give appropriate information on other topics.

How will this work in the Leys?

For the first year (from April 2006) a pilot project will be based in the Leys, Rose Hill and Barton. Health trainers will work from community venues like Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre, the UK Dads Potential Project in Kingfisher Green, Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre and the CAD project in Barns Road. Health trainers will also make contacts throughout the Leys.

Who can be a health trainer?

Health trainers will not need to have formal qualifications or experience in health work, as full training will be provided during the first year. They will need a good knowledge of English and any other language they expect to use at work, and to be willing to train in IT and communication as well as health issues. The training will be accredited and health trainers will be nationally recognised NHS posts. Health trainers will need to have a good knowledge of the communities they will be working in, and may well live locally. They will be good at listening and getting on with different kinds of people. They are likely to be people who are already active in their communities. The starting salary is set nationally and will be £13,266. Both full time and part time contracts will be available.

How can you apply to be a health trainer?

Health trainers will be employed by the NHS Primary Care Trust and the project will be co-ordinated through the Healthy Living Initiative. Application packs will be available soon.

For further information please contact one of the following:

Becky Willis	Healthy Living Initiative	01865 715577
Jackie Wilderspin	Oxford City Primary Care Trust	01865 226900
Marie McInnes	Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre	01865 773263
Carlton Gabbidon	UK Dads/ Potential (26 Kingfisher Green)	01865 779298

The Leys Linx Report

BY SUSAN FITZSIMONS

Hi, my name is Susan and I am the (relatively) new Information Worker at the Leys Linx Centre.

At the Leys Linx Centre you can get some information on most things that are happening in and around Blackbird/Greater Leys. If you are looking for playgroups, careers advice or the location of your nearest dentist, pop in and I'll find something for you.

If you are a community group looking for somewhere to meet, give me a call and we'll see if we can arrange something for you.

We also do photocopying, printing, faxing and laminating - all at very competitive rates.

Each month we have window displays, usually themed on local events that are happening. March was all about Sports. April is themed on the Park Rangers, Healthy Walks and Allotments. If you would like to get involved in any of these activities, I have all the details.

I am currently giving out free Energy Saving Light-bulbs to local residents from the Centre. If you would like some, pop in. This scheme is run by us, not the Council.

We have the Credit Union and the Blitz IT Hub right here, so if you would like to join the Credit Union or enrol on a course at the Hub, come in and have a look around!

You'll find us right next to the Community Centre. You can also phone 01865 402070 or e-mail leyslinx@blackbirdleys.com

Top Marks for Orchard Meadow Primary School

Pupils at Orchard Meadow with their letter from the school inspector.

Orchard Meadow Primary School is celebrating a successful inspection report. The report says "Orchard Meadow is an improving school in which all pupils are valued and included".

In a letter to all the pupils the inspectors wrote:

"Thank you for welcoming us when we came to visit your school last week. We were impressed by your good behaviour, positive attitudes and hard work. You told us that a lot of things have improved in the school over the last few years. Some of you said 'We used to get really easy work but now teachers are a bit stricter. We reckon that now they're giving us harder work, we'll do better'. We think you are absolutely right and that you get on best when you are given challenging things to do that make you think and work hard.

"We think that you are well cared for in school and you are usually given good guidance and support about how you can improve your work. The school is particularly good at making you all feel valued and included and encouraging you to get on well together."

Headteacher Chris Phillips said "We are so pleased that all the hard work done by staff, governors, families and of course the children has been recognised. We have just reopened in our new building and this report is the icing on the cake!"

poetry corner

Memories

The archives of all life,
Of peace, contentment and of strife.
Oh memory, if ever you should go,
Then all of life gone-by, will go also.

Then like a mighty oak
which stands in autumn bare,
Withered hopes and raw despair.
Tenaciously to cling to what remains,
And strive to revitalise the brain.

Then lo, behold how well
the deep recall,
Of past spring-times, summers, autumns,
winters all.
Then some almighty hand
may lead to share,
Experiences, both common-place
and rare.

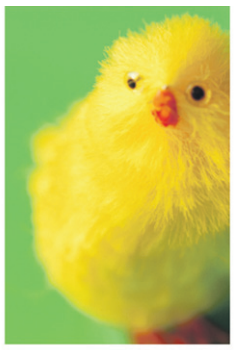
But should the chain that binds
the whole life through,
Be shattered, and then you become
not what, or who.
Determined, cling to what so ever
does remain,
And wilfully, aspire to make
whole the chain.

With boundless glee,
you could arise and give,
The wisdom of the age-ed life you live.
And careful lay the carpet down,
For others who when aged,
will follow on.

BY FRANK ISAHAK

CDI

Communtity Development Initiative



What's on at the Youth Centre in The Easter Holidays?

Trip to Coral Reef
Basketball tournament
Cinema
Glass painting
Lots of competitions
Chocolate egg prizes

3rd- 13th April, 10am - 4pm

Ring 01865 395 927 for more details

New Logo for CDI

During the Christmas project 2005, the CDI launched a logo competition, and is proud to introduce the new logo. The winning design is by Zoe Denton, who wins a £20 gift voucher.

Thank you Zoe!

Fundraising Project

Are you making use of this project?

The CDI has now run two 'introduction to Fundraising' courses for local groups and individuals.

In April and May we are offering **one-to-one support** for individuals and groups preparing bids to funders.

Need some help?
Ring Penny on 01865 395 927 to arrange a meeting

The Fundraising project is supported by Oxford City Council & Oxford County Council

Leys Learning Community Update

The Leys Learning Community is an exciting two year project bringing together local residents and education providers to try out different approaches to learning and skills. Similar projects are also running on Barton and Blackbird Leys.

My name is Jim Barlow. I live on Blackbird Leys and for the next two years I have the job of co-ordinating community learning on the estate.

Some of you will already know me. I have been working with local groups since 1998, including Strength in Numbers, the Leys Music Recording Studio and more recently with the GLOW project and the Credit Union.

Basically my role is to work at ground level, linking the schools, adult learning, the FE College and universities and, most important, involving and supporting local residents. This is not just to develop skills but also to try and give local people more of a say. My experience is that projects only work well when they put local people in the driving seat and respond to needs and interests in the community.

I often hear it said that people on the Leys "aren't interested in learning". Government agencies point to statistics showing the low number of people with qualifications, and label the Leys as a "problem area" in terms of education.

I want to challenge this, with your help. What I have seen, over my years on the estate, is a lot of very talented and gifted people who have never been given the support and encouragement to achieve what they are capable of. I have met too many people who were written off by the school system but are basically brighter than me.

Things have got better but we all know there are still big issues with the schools and how our children are being educated. And I know that people are not stupid - what is the point of learning and education if you have to go into debt to do it and if there is no guarantee of a better job at the end of it?

Of course there are negative attitudes towards education. Sometimes these are pushed by people who should know better. And all of us know what it was like as teenagers, when just about anything other than school seemed more important.

What I am saying is that I don't believe the people of Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys are thick. I believe human beings learn all the time and when you stop learning you start dying.

Anytime we do something new or different we are learning. Anything we do to change our lives or that of our family or community will involve learning. And if learning does not lead to change it isn't worth the name.

As you can see I go on a bit. But I do care passionately about learning and about this community in which I am privileged to live.

So if you are up for the challenge, or if you have any ideas or issues to do with learning and change, whether for yourself, your family or your neighbourhood please get in touch.

I probably don't know the answer but I may well know someone who does, or will work with you towards one.

Hall Makeover

As part of the project the main hall at Blackbird Leys Community Centre is having a make over, to bring it back into use as a clean, stylish and safe place for community activity and creative learning.

The ceiling, lighting, doors and windows are all being replaced. There will be new furniture and furnishings.

Two design students from Oxford Brookes are working on some different ideas for the decoration and finishing of the space.

I am looking for a small group of people who would be interested in looking at the design ideas, giving feedback and thinking about how the space looks and feels. This group needs to meet a couple of times in April and May.

Then, over the next twelve months and into the future we need people who want to help manage the space and think about how best to use it and develop it for the benefit of all the community.

There are two conditions - 1) all members of this group must live on the estate and 2) no member of the group, or immediate relatives of members of the group, will be able to make money for themselves from the space. These two rules will be strictly adhered to.

If you want to be involved in either group please contact me as soon as possible.

Some of the things we are doing right now...

Working with local schools - we are running sessions using music and video with children and parents from St John Fisher.

We are working with Pegasus School to produce a mural for the outside of their new Children's Centre building. The mural will be designed by parents and pupils from the school.

We are also working with performing arts students from Peers to develop their performance skills. We look forward to working with the other estate schools in the near future as well.

We are supporting the *Positive Lyrics Project* run by the CDI which is giving local young people the opportunity to develop their skills composing beats using software and also building up their lyrical skills.

We are also providing 1-2-1 learning support in ICT for local people and running workshops in how to set up your own BLOG (a cross between a website and an on-line personal diary)

Multi-media...

We are going to be able to provide some exciting opportunities to work with and learn about digital media.

These include: **Digital Video** (shooting & editing); **Flash animation & Web Design; Graphic Design & Desk-top Publishing; Music technology** (also community radio).

We already have the Music Recording Studio but soon we will also have a new multi-media hub, which will have a state of the art digital editing suite and all the equipment necessary to produce professional quality work.

Joe Rosa who provides technical support to the BLITZ IT Hub has been appointed as manager of the new multi-media hub. We will provide learning and support to people through taster sessions and more formal courses.

At the same time we feel it is important to link this learning into projects local people are involved in or want to see happen.

So we are looking for local people who have an idea or project that could take the form of a video or a short film or an interactive web-site or CD ROM. We would like to work with you and support you over the next two years to turn your idea into a reality.

Above: Joe Rosa

Leys Needs You...

We want to celebrate and value local people who engage with learning and even support others to learn.

Our vision of learning is wide open and definitely not limited to the classroom. If you have skills to share; if you feel learning is important; if you want to support your children's learning or encourage others to achieve their potential...

Please consider having an informal chat with someone from the Learning Community team about how we could help each other out.

Take the plunge and call the number....

Graphic designer wanted

We are looking for someone who lives on the estate with good ICT graphic design skills. This would be to do occasional pieces of work designing publicity and promotion materials.

Please contact Jim to discuss.

Just for girls?

Is poetry just for girls? Is poetry something written in a book? Is poetry written by professors of English?

What is a song if not rhythm and rhyme? The lyrics we hear are spoken rhymes. Poetry is meant to be spoken; to be heard, not text on a page but a living word.

Words spoken with feeling, words pregnant with meaning, words that haunt us, words that taunt us, words that sweep us up in a rush, that whisper in a hush, words that feed us, words that tease us and leave us . . . wanting more.

Want more? Creative writing, lyrics and performance poetry - we want to hear your voice.

Community Radio

A small group of people are setting up a community radio station for the Leys. This will broadcast on a trial licence later in the year, with a view to getting a full five-year community radio licence.

Training and skills development will be provided in producing programmes for radio, whether music or talk-based. If you are interested please call David on 0796 722 9102

Call and leave a message or send a text, we will get back to you: 0792 0211 405

SEEDA South East England Development Agency — Working for England's World Class Region
Oxfordshire County Council Lifelong Learning www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Oxford City Council

church news

The Church of the Holy Family

Any enquiries to: the Rev'd Fleur Houston (774672) and the Rev'd David Parry (778728)

Regular Services: All are welcome to our regular Sunday communion services at 10.00 am - there is special provision for children. And if you prefer a more meditative style of worship why not come along at 6.30 pm, for Time Out - for those of us who need a bit of space.

On Tuesdays at 9.00am we have short morning prayers for anyone to attend.
On Wednesdays we have prayers for the Leys community at 1.00 pm.

Every Sunday there are services with Eucharist at 10.00 am; for part of the service, children may attend our lively children's church. At 6.30 pm Time Out is a short reflective service with different styles of worship each week.

The Leys Community Church

The Leys Community Church meets on a Sunday afternoon between 3.30pm and 5pm at the Church of the Holy Family, Blackbird Leys.
We are a lively family church which believes that people are important and Jesus can make a difference to our daily lives. Our Sunday meetings are informal and relaxed and include special activities for children. We also support work in the local community including the Leys Youth Programme. If you'd like to know any details about the church, our community work or would simply like a chat then please feel free to phone Richard and Kate Colbrook on (01865) 714153.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Serving Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Garsington and Cuddesdon. Priest-in-charge: Fr. David Hartley, Tel 01865 779658.

Holy Week and Easter:

Palm Sunday, April 9th
9.30am Mass with palm procession and reading of the Passion Gospel
6.00pm Mass

Monday, April 10th
9.00am Mass
7.30pm Service of Reconciliation with Confessions

Tuesday, April 11th
7.00pm Rosary
7.30pm Mass

Wednesday, April 12th
8.00am Mass

Holy Thursday, April 13th
8.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper, Followed by prayer until Midnight

Good Friday, April 14th
11.00am Take part in the way of the cross walk with other local Christian Churches
3.00pm Liturgy, with veneration of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 15th
9.00pm Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Sunday, April 16th
9.30am Mass
6.00pm Mass

Green Fingers

By Stuart Mabbutt

Magic Beans!

Well isn't time flying, Christmas and the New Year seems but a distant memory, but how about making a late new year resolution? How about endeavouring to grow something exotic from a far-off country this year?

Exotic often equates to expensive to purchase too. But I can suggest something exotic, which is relatively simple to cultivate, a heavy cropper and save you money to boot.

Runner Beans may not seem exotic, but believe me, they most certainly are. They can be amazingly expensive in many shops (try Farmers Markets for cheaper beans without compromising the quality) and if they are not exotic prices, I would like to see something that you think is exotically priced then.

Grown properly, you could get a kilo off each runner bean plant. Next time you go to the supermarket, see how much a kilo of runner beans are, compare that to the cost of 1 bean seed and the savings are boundless.

Runner Beans should be grown up canes about 14 inches apart, and they are best picked young. Freezing the surplus ensures you will be eating them into the winter.

The flowers of these beans can also be considered exotic, I've known gardeners grow Runner Beans primarily for their flowering quality.

On introduction to this country from America in the 1630's, gardeners of the period only ever grew them as ornamental plants, just like we grow geraniums and Ageratums today.

It wasn't until the following century that the discovery was made that the pods were tasty and nutritious to eat. A packet of Runner Beans seeds cost around £3.50, with an average of 60 seeds per packet. You do the maths and see how much you can save. If you want to go the whole hog and even save the £3.50 for the seed and get your beans for free, then let some of the pods stay on the plant in autumn. When the pods have dried and gone brown, they can be harvested, and the ripe beans inside are your seeds for the following year's crop.

But don't leave beans on the plant until early in the growing season, or else the crop you pick to eat will be reduced, due to the plants putting their energies into producing seed. Wait until you have harvested what you need to eat and store before you allow the plants to produce seeds for you.

A lot of people shy away from these beans because they can be stringy, but modern varieties, if picked regularly when they are young and tender avoid this texture. These beans can also be grown in the same place for many consecutive years, where as crop rotation issues dictate where and when you can grow other crops.

So if you only have a small space for growing Runner Beans, it can be used year after year, avoiding the headache of trying to find different places to grow them.

So grow some Runner Beans this year and turn your garden into something exotic.

Happy gardening

STUART MABBUTT

WFCM

Word Fountain Christian Ministries

(A People of Inheritance Acts 20:32)

Modupe Adefala
Pastor

Cowley Community Centre
Barns Road, Oxford. OX4 3RQ
United Kingdom
Tel: (+44) 01865402108
Mob:(+44) 07958596340
email: pastor@wordfountain.org
web: www:wordfountain.org

Meetings:
Sunday Service: 11.00am-1.00pm at the Cowley Community Centre
Friday Prayer Meetings: 7.00pm to 9.00pm at the Church office in the Cowley Community Centre

The Oxfordshire Befriending Network

Do you want to make a difference?

We are looking for reliable and trustworthy people in this area to be Volunteer Befrienders to someone with a life threatening or terminal illness. We offer excellent free training and on going support.

Our next training course starts in May 2006
To find out more please contact Catherine Gundry on 01865 791781 or enquiries@oxonbefriending.net

Macmillan cancer relief

Registered Charity No.1086264

Want to Advertise in *LeysNews*?
We have special rates for community and not-for-profit organisations. Call Phil on 01865711756

BLITZ NEWS

Your Local Gateway to the Information Superhighway

Drop in to ICT anytime Monday to Friday 9.30 - 4.30pm and Saturday mornings 9.30 - 1.30pm. All are welcome to come along and use the high tech facilities at the IT Hub in Leys Linx. We offer free access to computers and the internet, and we give free advice and support for all your computing needs.

Maybe you know all about using a computer already and have some spare time on your hands - why not come and join the team as a voluntee? We are always looking for new recruits to join our friendly team of IT experts (and those who have just learned themselves) to share their knowledge with the local community, just pop in or give us a call and we will talk to you about how you can get involved in this project.

First time online?
Learn how to connect to the internet a short, free, course open for all who would like to try their hand at surfing the net. Pop in anytime to the IT Hub at Leys Linx and try your hand at this easy-to-understand course. Full support and tuition is available from our friendly team of tutors and staff.

Others have visited the IT Hub for the following reasons: Help setting up, sending and receiving email; Creating a presentation for an event; Free advice on buying a computer; One to one support from a skilled tutor in creating documents such as spreadsheets, newsletters, posters and databases; Support and training for those who have never used a computer before (or feel uneasy about using one); To burn a CD; Meet people; To change babies nappy!

Blackbird Leys IT Hub
Phone Oxford 714492
www.blackbirdleys.com

Courses

Beginners Course
starts Wednesday
19th April at 6pm

Build and Upgrade Your Computer
starts Saturday
22nd April at 1.30pm

Web Design with Dreamweaver
starts Monday
24th April at 6pm

Learn Photoshop in our Images course
starts Tuesday
18th April at 10am

We also have taster sessions in the following subjects coming up...

First Time Online
E-Skills Passport
Create PDFs
Podcast
Scanning

These are all on Wednesday afternoons between 1pm and 4pm and are totally free for anyone!

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what's on weekly

Age Resource Desk at the Clockhouse:
Mon, Tues, Thurs, 10.30am - 1pm
Computer access for the over 50's.
Ring 717614 to book

The Barn Youth Club
Mondays 6.30-8.30pm - ages 9+
Wednesday, 6.30-8.30pm
Held at the Barn. 13+

Brownies:
Thursday 6-7.30pm,
Holy Family Church Hall
(for 7 to 11 age group)

CAD Drop-In:
Drugs & Alcohol advice,
Tues & Fri, 12-4pm,
49 Barns Road
(Ox 402919)

Carer and toddler group Until September:
Friday, 1-3pm at
the Dovecote. £1

Girls Street Dance:
BBL Leisure Centre, 50p.
13yrs-16yrs: Tuesdays,
4.45 - 5.45pm
8yrs -12yrs: Wednesdays,
4.45 - 5.45pm

Girls Aerobics:
BBL Leisure Centre. 50p. Tues, 6 -7pm,
14 -18 years

Dovecote Afterschool Club:
Monday to Thursday,
3.15 - 4.45pm

Dovecote Saturday Club
(for ages 5-12) 10am-1pm.

Dance Classes at the Barn:
Tues: 4-5pm, 5-11years; 5-6pm, 12 years plus. £3.30. Freestyle, disco, street-dance.

The Edge - Youth Club
BBL Community Centre.
Wed, 1-4.30pm.
Drop in 7.30-9.30pm

Guides: Friday 7-9pm at the Holy Family Church. Girls, 10-15 years. Info: 455970.

1st Blackbird Leys Rainbow Guides: 5-7 yrs,
Fridays, 5.30-6.30pm
Holy Family Church Hall,
Cuddesdon Way.
Contact - Laura 0778 7528120

Holy Family Church:
Sunday service 10am,
with lively children's church.

Junior Edge Project:
4.30 - 6pm, Tuesday and Thursday, BBL Community Centre (Supporting black and mixed heritage children)

Leys Community Church
Sunday service 3.30pm at Holy Family Church.

Sacred Heart Catholic Church:
Mass, every Sunday, 9.30am and 6pm

Self Defence:
6-9pm, Tuesday at the Barn

State Pension Advice Surgery:
Leys Linx Centre, 2nd & 4th Monday of the month 9.30am-12.30pm

Swimming:
Blackbird Leys Pool.
Mondays, 11.30-12.30pm: 60+ swimming (free).
Tuesdays & Fridays, 12-1pm: Water Workout.
Wednesdays, 12 - 1pm: 50+ swimming.
Thursdays 12 -1pm: Duckings Parent & toddler classes.
Info: Ox 467042

Weight Watchers:
7-8pm, Thursday at the Barn

Slimming World:
New Testament Church of God, Cowley. Wednesdays, 7pm. Info: Ox 438114

Potters Court Bingo:
Every Monday from 6pm.
Contact Edward on 07913 924579

Leys Youth Football Club:
BBL Leisure Centre on Fridays, 50p.
Boys:
School Yrs 3 to 6: 4-5pm.
School Yrs 7 to 8: 5-6pm.
School Yrs 9 to 11: 6-7pm.
Girls:
8yrs to 16yrs: 7-8pm
Wednesdays 2-4pm

Over 60s Club
Wednesdays 2-4pm,
at the Holy Family Church Hall

your councillors

PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Brian Lester. **Vice Chair:** Bob Avery. **Treasurer:** Sharon Cole. **Non position holders are:** Ron Harris, Chris Hatton, Rae Humberstone, Cyril Martin, Chris Pill, Gordon Roper.

For further details call: 01865 734346, office hours 8.00am - 6.00pm, Monday to Friday, or leave a message.

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Blackbird Leys Ward:

Lee Cole - Independent Working Class Association,
31 Long Ground, Greater Leys, OX4 7WS, 07771 996945, lee.cole47@ntlworld.com
Every Thursday from 7.30-8.30 at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
Rae Humberstone - Labour,
75 Little Bury, Greater Leys, OX4 7UZ, 01865 779678, raehumberstone@btinternet.com
Every Friday at 4.00 at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.

Northfield Brook Ward:

Stuart Craft - Independent Working Class Association,
Every Wednesday from 6.30-8.30 at the Clockhouse, Greater Leys.
Carole Roberts - Labour,
16 Clematis Place, Blackbird Leys, Oxford OX4 6RJ, 01865 454463, cllrcroberts@oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD COUNTY COUNCIL

Leys & Lye Ward:

Val Smith - Labour,
4 Flaxfield Road, OX4 6QD, 01865 396073, val.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Barbara Gatehouse - Labour,
51 Ashgrove, Oxford, OX3 9JN, 01865 741060, barbara.gatehouse@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

WHAT DO AREA COMMITTEES DO?

The six Area Committees are responsible for the following:
ABANDONED VEHICLES, ALLOTMENTS, CEMETERIES, DECISIONS ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS, DOG WARDENS, DITCHES AND STREAMS, PUBLIC TOILETS, CAR PARKS, PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE MANAGEMENT, STREET CLEANING, STREET NAMING, COMMUNITY CENTRES.

SOUTH EAST AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Ring 252249 for further information

Monday 3rd April
6pm, at Littlemore Village Hall

Monday 3rd July
6pm, at Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

Monday 5th June
6pm, at Rose Hill Community Centre, The Oval

Want to help improve your community? Get involved with the

Leys Residents Association (LRA)

'your voice on Greater Leys'

Achievements to date include: campaigned to save the bus service; worked hard to get the Spar shop; worked with the Health Centre to include local artists in the design of the artwork; supporting local youth initiatives and are currently campaigning to ensure that there is fair parking on the estate.

Is there are problem near you? The LRA can help.

Upcoming meetings:

- **Tuesday 9th May,** 6.30 - 8pm at the Clockhouse, Long Ground, Greater Leys.
- **Tuesday 11th July,** 6.30 - 8pm at the Clockhouse
- **Tuesday 12th September,** 6.30 - 8pm at the Clockhouse
- **Tuesday 14th November,** 6.30 - 8pm at the Clockhouse

All meetings are open to all members of the public, but membership is restricted to residents of Greater Leys and Falcon Close.

Come down to a meeting or contact 334802 for more information

Oxford United 3, Queens Park Rangers 0

Wembley, 20th April 1986

It was only 20 years ago this month when Oxford United FC was the toast of the footballing world. A small provincial club had achieved the near impossible by lifting the Milk Cup at Wembley in front of around 90,000 fans.

BY PHIL CITRONE

Jeremy Charles scoring for United in the 1986 Milk Cup Final

As the club has traditionally drawn core support from the Blackbird Leys and the surrounding areas. Leys News has taken the opportunity to take a look at what could have gone so wrong that this once proud club currently finds itself languishing at the bottom of League 2 fighting to preserve its league status.

So where has it all gone wrong? It was apparent even 20 years ago that united were fighting above their 'weight' and those glory years could not last indefinitely. Since then the club have struggled financially and this came to a head around 7 years ago when players and staff weren't getting paid and the club was only hours from going out of business.

In stepped Firoz Kassam a self made millionaire hotelier who took over the club. He was hailed as the club's saviour and he promised fans he would take the club on "a journey". Unfortunately nobody expected the journey to be on such a downward spiral. Although he successfully fought many legal obstacles to move the club from its spiritual home in Headington the endearing but crumbling Manor ground to a new purpose built stadium on the edge of the Blackbird Leys the club has continued to deteriorate.

Many fans now lay the problems squarely at the feet of Kassam citing a lack of investment not only in the team but the infrastructure of the club. The Kassam Stadium often appears scruffy, unwelcoming and lacking in atmosphere, which is not helped by only having 3 sides. Fans point to the other leisure developments that have sprung up around the ground as being the real motivation behind Kassam's involvement.

Others accuse the club of abandoning its roots and loosing touch with the local community.

Certainly Mr Kassam has made few friends in the 'Leys' over the years.

The past 7 years have also seen a rapid turnover in managers and players; this has meant a lack of stability vital to any successful team. During this depressing time the club's loyal but dwindling band of fans have endured 2 relegations and 5 seasons in the bottom level of league football. Relegation to the conference would for many be the final straw.

Well where do the club go from here?

Things rarely stay the same for long at Oxford United and what appeared as a last ditch attempt to rescue the season and appease the fans Kassam brought back Bill Smith and Brendon Cross to assume executive responsibility for the day-to-day management of the club while Kassam remained as a "non-executive chairman". Their first action was to sack manager Brian Talbot and replace him with Youth Team coach Darren Patterson. Feelings have continued to run high and this was particularly evident as fans protested against Kassam at a recent home match. More similar protests have been planned by fans for future games.

Stop Press...

As Leys News is about to go to press we have learned that following 2 months of speculation the club has now been taken over by a consortium headed by legendary manager Jim Smith and Nick Merry a local business man and former Oxford youth player.

Nobody knows what the immediate future holds for the beleaguered football club and whether they can survive in the league this season. What is clear is that both the short tem and longer term hopes of the fans will now be raised.

Leys News hopes that the change of ownership will benefit not only the team's on the pitch performance but also help to forge greater links with the local 'Leys' community. Whatever happens we all hope that it doesn't take another 20 years for the good times to return again.

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Easter holiday activities

Be active and have fun this Easter.
Swimming, ice skating, racket sports and snooker are just some of the activities available. Call or visit www.oxford.gov.uk for more information.

New for 2006 - Blackbird Leys Pool will be open on Tuesday 18th April

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre	01865 467020
Blackbird Leys Pool	01865 467040
Peers Sports Centre	01865 467095
Temple Cowley Pools	01865 467124
Barton Pool (from 13.04.06)	01865 467290
Oxford Ice Rink	01865 467002
Ferry Sports Centre	01865 467060

slice